suddenly transcended racism and the workings of this capitalist system just because they join such groups. They are ”race traitors”, Anarchists, or anti racists, so they could not ”possibly” be racists, or so they think. Left-wing political movements are as guilty of racism as any other kind of social organization in a racist society.

They must be made aware of this and they should understand part of a progressive’s role is to try to empower peoples of color in the Anarchist or radical movement when we come into the movement, rather than retard our development. They should do the exact opposite of what whites in society do on the job, in civil organizations, or in the professions, rather than engage in racial discrimination themselves.

I am not implying all white radicals are inherently racist, part of some ”evil” biological species, nor that I have seen racism among every Anarchist or radical tendency. Rather what I am saying is that I have seen many Left-wing activists who are ultimately conditioned with the same racist social values as many whites in America. So to merely declare that one is a ”race traitor” or is a member of an anti-racist group is not nearly meaningful enough to claim an exception from the entire history of white supremacy. This is merely a form of self-delusion. Honesty is one of the best qualities of a true anti-racist organizer, not posturing.

The white Anarchists must be willing to join the inevitable movement of peoples of color for freedom and liberation, rather just denouncing it as ”politically incorrect.” Of course, I am firstly talking about people of color sympathetic to Anarchism who have formed autonomous movements. It has been my experience that such groups have been isolated or neglected by the Anarchists themselves. Then, usually because of lack of material aid and political support, they have withered away and died.

Roots of Resistance in Vancouver, the Black Autonomy movement, Colors of Resistance and there are others that I know of, which have briefly surfaced over the years and then died away because of isolation, lack of material aid, lack of political support and

The Progressive Plantation: racism inside white radical social change groups

Lorenzo Kom’boa Ervin

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So why the hostility towards Chicanos, Africans in America, Arabs and others from the 3rd world when they try to build new Anarchist or radical movements? Well, as they apparently see it, we threaten the hegemony of white radicals to continue Anarchism of Socialism in its current form. As it stands, the white radicals currently define and organize the movement. The reality is that as long as it is white-dominated, it will only reflect a Eurocentric worldview of a privileged class, instead of the position of those of us on the bottom of the social ladder. Oh, they give lip service of so-called ”universality” of the ”Anarchist/Socialist ideal”, ”anti-racism”, the support of the liberation struggles of oppressed peoples in Mexico or the ”Euro-Asian Roma ethnic group, and they give tactical support for Troy Davis or Mumia Abu Jamal, but all of their real efforts are to maintain white supremacy in the Anarchist or Socialist movements. No one else can come along and revise the theory.

True, most white activists are more ignorant than evil when it comes to issues of race and class, but their defensiveness and hostility just tell people of color that they are not truly welcome in the Anarchist movement, unless they are under white control. In other words, the POC must be willing to be objectified, that is become a mindless ”house nigger of the Left”, willing to smile, parrot the views of the white leaders and keep their mouth shut.

Shamefully, there are even so-called ”political wiggers” (white niggers) who have co-opted Black (or Indian/Chicano/Asian) culture styles and who work at seeming more visibly ”Black” or authentic seeming than the people of color in the group itself. I am thinking of particular persons in mind here. It’s, of course, all an act, a charade to give white radicals entire leadership and authority over such movements. This charade occurs throughout the white Left and has always made myself and other persons of color feel very uncomfortable.

One thing I do not understand is why white people who call themselves Anarchists or radicals, think that somehow they have

For many years, I have criticized the contemporary Anarchist movement for being too Eurocentric and focused on white youth culture. I repeat those earlier criticisms, which have hardly been welcomed, but never refuted, but then now point out the entire progressive social justice movements and radical tendencies suffer from the same internal racism. When confronted, some have outright acknowledged the truth of those criticisms ,and while a few even supported them to make changes within various segments of the Anarchist and radical movements, most have been defensive or outright hostile to the charges.

Some have counter-attacked: I have been accused of many misdeeds by various white Anarchist and radical movements, while raising the matter of a lack of diversity and disempowerment of POC in the movement. The counter-charges, including that I am making blanket ”false charges” of racism against white Anarchists and progressives, of ”wrecking” organizations if I see racist practices inside them, and other complaints, which have made me an outcast among some. I have even had whispers behind my back that I am somehow ”hard on white people” because I challenge their racism.

I believe that all this is hypocritical and makes a lie of the core ideals of Anarchism and Socialism. It just gives ideological cover to white domination and exploitation of the movement. ”This is our movement, damn it, and you Anarchists/ Socialists of color cannot change it!”

Well, I am sorry, but that is exactly what we intend to do. We intend to make it serve our needs, to make it fit our cultural, political, economic circumstances and confirm to our histories of struggle. I have been saying for years that peoples of color coming into the Anarchist and other white radical movements will change it, just as European immigrants who brought a variant of it to America from the mid-late 1800’s onwards to the 20th century, practiced it based on their ethnicity and social customs as Russian Jews, Italians, Poles, Germans and other European peoples.

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The Anarchist and Progressive Movements: Still Too White, Middle Class and Self-Absorbed

Blacks and peoples of color could get them ostracized as ”Nigger lovers” and perhaps physically attacked by bigots. There is much racism in the white working class itself.

But this type of hard, ”dirty” work has to be done, no matter how unpopular or dangerous, if we are to deal with the effects of racism and fascist indoctrination in white communities. Thus, we have to be part of the people. We must understand no revolutionary force will arise from the white working population if they are not empowered and re-educated. They must not only be challenged on their racism, but raised up as a political force to fight, then educated to stand with Black, Brown and other non-whites peoples to overthrow the system of oppression.

Speaking honestly, while it is still a white dominated movement, Anarchists and Socialists must live and organize among poor and working class folks in white communities if we are to make a social revolution even half-way real. While I am not against them living in communities of color individually, white Anarchists are not needed to lead or organize Black or peoples of color in their neighborhoods, and yet they cannot remain with white ”dropout” youth exclusively in their political work. In fact, the days are numbered of Anarchism and progressive groups as a sub-cultural white youth milieu, excluding workers, seniors, non-whites, the poor and other grassroots groups. We must move forward as a diverse force of millions fighting for a new world, not be stuck in a stage of isolated white middle class idealists.

Racism inside white radical social change groups

Source
book cover
A short book discussing racism and anti-working class attitudes in radical groups, and how to fight it

1. Contradictions of Race and Class in the Struggle
2. Internal Racism: the Example of Anarchism
3. Plantation Politics and the Left
4. Who Said You Were an Anti-Racist Ally?
5. ”I can’t possibly be a racist…”
6. Peace and Justice Centers are one hell of place for Peoples of Color to work
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8. Class Snobbery, or why white radicals are afraid of white working people
9. The Anarchist and Progressive Movements: Still Too White, Middle Class and Self-Absorbed
10. Class Unity and POC Autonomy is the only real solidarity
11. Critique of the Anti-Globalization Movement
12. Occupy Wall Street: internal racism run amok!
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15. Conclusion

Anarchists do not believe in revolutions by a Leninist party of elite revolutionary intellectuals ”guiding” (and then ruling over) the downtrodden masses. We believe that it is the people who will make the revolution, not so-called leaders. Yes, white Anarchists must work with peoples of color, but they must be active in their own communities as well, if they will build the diverse movement we all desire. We must challenge and educate against racism and undermine fascist ideology in white communities.

One of the most egregious failing of many white activists is their fear and unwillingness to organize in white working class communities. So many want to come down and organize in communities of color. For years, I have tried to get Anarchists to do community based organizing in white working class communities, tried to establish the Anti-Authoritarian Network of Community Organizers (AANCO) some years ago and had worked with the various ”Active Resistance” meetings held between 1996-2000, but these were abject failures. The Anarchists simply don’t get it. If we don’t reach out to ”ordinary” folks, instead of Déclassé punks with red Mohawks, we will forever be trapped in our current status as a ”milieu” instead of a movement.

Some of this reticence to organize in white working class communities, is because they themselves come from privileged upper middle class families, have gone to elite universities and feel estranged not only from the political establishment, but from daily social existence experienced by poor and working people as well. Thus they engage in revolutionary posturing of ”speaking for” poor people. It is really the same nonsense I have seen for years: though these white radicals may give lip service of fighting for ”workers’ rights” and even advocating for the poor, they really are extremely alienated and fearful of working and poor working class people, even if they are white.

But, it is not just these cultural and class differences which frighten them, they also know that going into white working class areas and talking about racism, police brutality, or human rights for

Class snobbery, or why white radicals are afraid of white working people

Introduction - Contradictions of Race and Class In the Struggle

I first started writing about internal or institutional racism in radical social change movement circles when I wrote the second edition of my book, ”Anarchism and the Black Revolution” in 1994. That book reflected my frustrations in dealing with an almost all-white Anarchist social movement that I have been identified with for over 40 years now. I have never accepted this internal racism as the way it has to be, and have always been a critic and thorn in the side of the Anarchist movement. Yet, they have never attempted to bring Peoples of Color into full participation or give them an equal voice in the movement, nor raise the issues affecting them and their peoples, which is drastically different from the white middle class agenda, or of white radicals generally. Since racism has to be overthrown, instead of voluntarily changed by the white leadership, there is no chance to reform these movements in most instances. They are corrupt, as well as racist, but they are stronger than other groups because they have corporate grant money at their disposal.

Even so, it is important for anti-racist/anti-colonial activists to continue trying to dismantle racism inside these movements or organizations, and failing that, to dismantle the groups themselves entirely. If allowed to continue, they do more harm than good. Activists must recognize the damage of internal racism, the politics which support it, and how to deal with it, and then act swiftly and forcefully, sometimes even ruthlessly.

The truth is that most anti-racist white radicals cannot bring themselves to bring the needed cold—blooded efficiency and commitment to the task. They are lured away from their task by friendships with other white people in the group, their fear of being excluded or shunned, lack of commitment to the struggle, lack of consistent support of peoples of color, and compromising or selling out to their own deep-seated racism and political opportunism. Somewhere in the back of their minds are self-doubts: ”things can’t be this bad [!]”, ”we do try to help some people”, ”these are good people I know here, who could not possibly be racist”, or ”they just need a little sensitivity training”. I have devoted a chapter to that last

ological imperialism, the practice of which must be recognized and smashed within the Left. But what is ideological imperialism?

We are talking about imperialism, a system of social, economic, political and economic domination by an external power elite, [could be another nation-state], in this instance a class of upper class white peoples organized into an activist movement using their superior financial, economic, and movement resources to dominate the entire social movement for justice, and control its militancy, goals, and strategies. This type of replication of oppression is a fundamental part of the establishment of the progressive plantation.

It is absolutely essential that white progressive and radical activists become aware of these places, and the kinds of evils perpetrated within. There needs to be a struggle to either transform these places, or shut them down. We need to empower these POC within these places to fight these racists, and to not passively accept internal racism as the ”norm”.

Since the white progressive groups do not really unite with the various liberation struggles of peoples of color, they must give the illusion of sympathy. Thus they hire Black or Brown faces, and have them posture as a full member of the group, and to act as their representative in the Black community. Thus they hire Black or Brown faces, and have them posture as a full member of the group, to speak up when they are attacked over their duplicity and racism.

During chattel slavery, the white plantation owner had a privileged class of ”house negroes”, who did the master’s bidding at every turn, and united with the master to such a degree that they protected him from the other slaves, the ’field negroes”, and saw themselves as part of the master’s household. In return, they got better clothing, food and housing, and more privileges than the common field slaves. After a time, they did not even believe that they were slaves, but rather a butler or ”manservant” to this rich white man, who exploited Black labor, misery, and suffering for a profit, but treated them ”fine”. The master referred to them as house niggers, even to their faces.

Now, on the Progressive Plantation, this same kind of racist dynamic is in play. These progressive groups hire Black and other peoples of color, to use them as a foil against the Black/POC communities. They are hired as administrators or spokespersons for a majority white organization, and are to protect the master’s interest at all time, even if it conflicts with his/her own or their community’s best interests. These people have no power within the organization, and are expected to be a complete puppet, just for sake of a paycheck or for recognition from white people. Many settle for that. I refused to be one who did.

It needs to also be recognized that the radical socialist and Anarchist movements have the same kinds of figures of color, who perform the same role. They are slaves on the white radical plantation, have no voice and tolerate all kinds of abuse, just to be part of the movement. It is an unhealthy, oppressive relationship, which reflects white domination of the movement. It is an example of ide-

thought about ”anti-racist sensitivity and consciousness raising”, which I consider a total fraud that never challenges white racism inside these organizations or in society at large.

I cannot honestly say that white radicals will make changes in their organizations or themselves, but I can say that if they do not, peoples of color will soon rise up in a mass rebellion or revolution against the oppressive conditions they live under, and overthrow not only the capitalist state, but all of their collaborators, including the white-led nonprofit organizations and radical reform movements that receive corporate money and uphold the entire system of white wealth.

I give white radicals the tools to work with, a theoretical framework, and some analysis of racial oppression. I cannot, however, make them take the steps to actually use in dismantling racism inside radical movements. I just tell them that their lip service and feeble attempts to this point are unacceptable, and one day it will all be taken out of their hands. So they had better act now, or they will find themselves on the wrong side, when these decisive battles take place.

Internal Racism: The Example of Anarchism

House Niggers of the Left

Leftists make the worst kinds of racists, because they posture as anti-racists and ”friends” of Black people. This woman, Jane, even hypocritically sneered that she used to support the Black Panther Party back in the 1960’s, which meant absolutely nothing to me. But this is a reflection of how they truly believe that because they are pacifist radicals that they cannot practice or harbor racism in their movements. It is the worst form of self-deception.

They have swallowed the illusion that their consciousness as white social justice activists, around a white middle class agenda, is liberating for all. They do not accept that they themselves are racists, and have merely replicated the same social oppressions inside their movements that the larger society does, and that the only differences are to degree and form. Progressives make the worst kinds of racists because they want you to believe that every vile racist act they perform is a good service by ”good white people”. Well, with ”friends” like these who needs enemies?

They uphold racism, middle class reactionary politics, and exist on corporate grant money like the parasites they are. I did not realize at the time, how many of these pacifist peace and justice centers there were. It seems that every state has at least one. They all have the same kind of politics and approach, and encapsulate pacifist views of radicalism. They are also infested with the same kind of internal racism. It is literally hell for peoples of color to work at such institutions, along with other white social justice non-profit groups. They are literally enemies of the people, a do-gooder front, to carry out Liberal Left-wing politics for the governments and corporations. They are paid handsomely by capitalist social change foundations with rich peoples’ money, the scraps they give to keep the ”restless natives” under control.

Anarchism is probably the largest white radical tendency on the Left today, owing to its ties to punk rock music, and other white youth cultural trends, so it serves as a perfect example of internal racism in the radical social change movements generally, but I point out that this variations of this same kind of racism happens inside all white Left tendencies. As I have stated, I have been a member of the Anarchist movement for over 40 years, but even so, there are some doctrinaire groups on the Anarchist scene, who actually refuse to accept myself and other Anarchists of color as being ”legitimate.” It is as if there is an Anarchist ”membership card” and since we can’t produce such a ”card,” we should be barred at the door to the ”club.” There are apparently Anarchist groups still doing this type of racial exclusion, demanding prospective members denounce Black, Chicano or Asian nationalism to such an extent that they meet the group ideological litmus test. Now, it’s important to point out they don’t demand incoming women members denounce feminism or gay members denounce the Queer Liberation Movement, nor whites to even denounce racism, but they want to lay that burden on people of color sympathetic to Anarchism. It is as though they feel we are untrustworthy or politically unclean. Why else?

These people want to demand ideological conformity, to make those incoming people of color toe the line. I believe they are threatened by the idea of possibly large numbers of people of color joining the Anarchist movement and especially by the idea they might create autonomous tendencies that would challenge white hegemony of the overall movement. Predictably, there will those among them who will rise up in mock alarm at the very notion… ”how dare you say this?” ”See there, he’s making trouble again!” But I have seen it happen numerous times over the years and am frankly sick of it. There is no use pretending there is no racism in the Anarchist scene, or trying to discredit me for raising the issue. I have both seen and experienced it myself.

Fortunately, this white reaction is not the totality of the issue. It is not all about backward elements among the Anarchists and their feeble attempts to control People of Color by barring the door with a political literacy test or even barring our right to speak at meetings. People of color will be a part of the Anarchist movement and are in the process of building their own tendency. I do want to state my criticisms though, in this version of the book.

I have been accused of ”worker-ism” in some of my writing and this has been projected as ”old school”. Well, most folks still do work for a living, in contrast to the bohemian Anarchists, although I acknowledge structural unemployment that has made millions of persons as a surplus labor force. However, this does not mean they do not belong to a working class. Further, even if it is weak numerically and its leadership is corrupt, most folks consider it a good thing to join a union, especially at a bad worksite. I realize that the nature of the poor and working people have changed and capitalism has gone on to new modes of production, some call this a ”capitalist transformation.” from industrialism to high-tech and I agree, but this has not obliterated class difference or done away with work itself. Class contradictions between rich and poor, order-givers and order-takers, workers and bosses remain. So, I continue to talk about a labor movement, workers and poor people in the present tense. They are real people, not figments of my imagination.

Clearly, there will not be any future labor or community victories that do not include Black and other non-white workers as a strategic force. Yet, the white Left, including regrettably some groups of Anarcho-Syndicalists and ”Platformists,” still think that the white industrial workers are the vanguard for the revolution and that workers of color should just wait on them to move from their privileged positions. Now this is not just a matter of semantics, I have actually had them very distinctly tell me this. Yet, it is clear to me that they do not really understand how capitalism and white supremacy operate in America.

I was shocked and embittered, but knew this was an attempt to intimidate me or provoke me to retaliate.

The next day, I filed a formal employee grievance against this board member, called ” auntie Jane” by many of the group members. As soon as I filed this employee grievance, almost all of the board members claimed that I had made the entire incident up, that Jane would ”not do such a thing”, and that the entire group was ”not capable” of racism. They demanded that I apologize to her[!] Failing that, they also made my work at the NPJC as hostile and demeaning as possible, and then claimed that I was not ”carrying out my duties”, and was adopting a ”hostile attitude” towards the board. I was continually being told that I would be fired if I did not drop the employee grievance charge. The hypocrisy of this is that even though they screwed over myself and other employees, they continually chirped and organized around ”Jobs for Justice” run by the AFL-CIO. There was to be no justice for those that worked for them however.

Eventually, this woman ”auntie” Jane and some of her allies, made another motion for firing, and eventually a bogus hearing was held where the ”evidence” of ”insubordination” and ”failure to perform my duties” was produced. This evidence was a secret letter to the board by a white woman who had been a predecessor in the job, and was enraged that she had to give up the position for me. She submitted a scurrilous false statement claiming that I told her that I ”did not want the job”, that I had no computer skills and ”was not qualified for the position”, and other false statements. This had been submitted shortly after I arrived, but I was never told of its existence. She was a racist, and did not like Black people at all. She made that abundantly clear. She was never called to testify at the so-called termination hearing, and I was never served with a copy of the letter before or during the hearing. I was just summarily fired.

What all this brought forcibly home to me is how corrupt, hypocritical and racist this movement was. The truth is that pacifists and

In June 2006, I took a job in Nashville, Tennessee to become the Administrative Coordinator of the Nashville Peace and Justice Center, (NPJC) one of a number of pacifist movements sprouting up around the country, that bring together a number of social change, liberal, and radical movements. Until I took the job in Nashville, I had no first-hand contact with such movements, and was unaware of their histories as sellout, racist, and poverty pimp organizations. I was soon to learn however. First, I was hired on the false pretext that a large part of what I was going to be doing, besides running the organization, was anti-racist training of the membership body and members of the board of directors.

However, almost as soon as I arrived, I found out that this organization was irretrievably a white racist entity, and that I had no power to change anything. In fact, the reason I was hired was because no one locally in the Black community wanted the job, they were hip to the history of the NPJC and were repulsed by its racism. One other reason I was hired as the first administrative coordinator of color, was because there was an apparent split of the white board of directors, who had tried some feeble attempts at anti-racist reforming the organization, and failing that, at least pushed for the hiring of a person of color.

Being put in the middle of the split between the whites caused me to catch hell, and then when I tried to enlist the few peoples of color for support, the board called that ”racial agitation” and tried to fire me. I had been there less than two months, and one of the factions tried to run me off. The so-called ”good white people” [who had voted to hire me] and the open racists, [who wanted me fired] held a personnel hearing and found that there was no grounds for me to be fired. But I was continually the object of harassment by these white people, who used every occasion to strike at me. At one board of directors hearing, the same white woman who had brought the original motion to fire me, turned around and grabbed papers out of my hands and threw them into the trash.

Their theories were made for a time when white male workers dominated industry and the work force. The face of the American working class has changed however. For one thing there are more women working, along with more racial minorities and foreign-born workers than ever before. These workers of color are all subjected to oppression and exploitation on the dual grounds of race and class and thus have to fight the extra battles against racism and discrimination. They are in labor unions, but also constitute the largest number of unemployed, homeless and underemployed and they are the largest number of unorganized workers.

I remember some years ago having a critical discussion with some white South African Anarchists, who put forth a political line of white radical domination of the social change movement and the question crossed my mind whether these people had even taken part in the anti-apartheid struggle there, or just appeared as a tendency after the struggle was over. Clearly they were part of the white settler class, at least ideologically. Now they project themselves as revolutionary ”leaders” and lecturers after Black people there have shed blood to overturn a system of racial oppression which benefited a large segment of the white population.

This is similar to the situation in the United States; where on the scale of things, white radicals and progressives played a miniscule role in the Black civil rights movement. Yet these white radical groups have revised history as though they had been a part of everything, were in fact leaders and can now lecture everyone on their political failings.

There is something very wrong here. These white middle-class so-called ”radicals,” who have never suffered, been oppressed, or been forced to risk life and limb, need to learn to listen to those who have. They need to recognize that they do not have all the answers and it is only because of their white skin privilege that they can even articulate the political dimensions of these social problems. They have analysis with paralysis.

This structure of concentrated poverty and poverty in communities of color is clearly racism, but the white radicals are mostly silent or missing in action of the campaigns against it. We must demand that they stand up and join with the peoples of color. We say that this class collaborationism with the state and the boss class must be overcome before a successful campaign against capitalism can be made a reality. Accordingly, we must end the system of white skin privilege on the job and in society. We cannot leave it to another day, or see it as a minor thing to be addressed later. History has shown ”later” never comes.

The white radicals claim it’s all about a mere division of Black and POC away from them, as if working with white people is the linchpin of ending racism. Yes, the bosses use this racial division to split the working class and maintain control of the workforce, not just between Black and white, but between women and men, foreign born and citizens and so on. But white workers, especially those in the Western world, generally accept this employment/ societal racism and must resist the attempt to use one section of the working class to help them advance, while holding back the gains of another segment based or race or nationality.

This is how the capitalists subject workers of color to super-exploitation; they work under the worst conditions for unequal pay. This kind of class opportunism and capitulationism on the part of white labor has historically prevented development of a united movement — not the demands of workers of color, as many white radicals like to claim. White racism must be directly confronted. There can be no defeat of the capitalist system until the system of super-exploitation and world white supremacy is brought to an end.

Of course, I still believe that the unity of Black/POC and white workers is indispensable to combat and overthrow the system of Capitalism. But where white workers are now privileged and Black workers are penalized in this society, Black and Latino unity and struggle must precede and prepare the ground for any possible

It’s hell for POC to Work at Peace and Justice Centers

actually a subversion of existing social movements from the Left, to finish destroying autonomous Black/POC movements, and allow these new nonprofit radical social change movements to take their place. Of course. everyone realized they were selling out to capitalism and racism. their role was to co-opt , and make unnecessary, autonomous local political movements and deliver their bones to the capitalist bosses. In that sense they worked, hand-in-glove with government repression programs COINTELPRO, who was doing the real killing and subversion of groupslike the Black Panther Party.

These white radical social justice groups always have had access to more capital than any of the autonomous movements of colur, and so they can use that to challenge, co-opt and crush autonomous movements of color. Internally, they carry out a purely white radical agenda, although they sometimes hire POC ”faces” to trick the public, even communities of color that they are both tolerant, and are their anti-racist allies.

Inside these groups, they make sure that white people really control things, and that the POC are just window dressing. They mislead would-be radical movements into the most tame, white middle class activism possible. They do not actually oppose government officials, except in the most limited ”safe”, fashion possible to obtain the passage of regulations or passive reforms. They do not advocate or believe in revolutionary organizing, and do not ”break the law”, except in permitted instances using nonviolent protest actions. They actually keep the capitalists in power. I am not the first author to say this, Two books: ”Pacifism as Pathology” by Ward Churchill and ”How Nonviolence Protects the Government” by Peter Gelderloos, very forcefully made the case. I am saying it as a person of color who has directly suffered at the hands of such groups, and know first-hand that pacifism is a retrograde force, and will lead us to defeatism ultimately.

unity with white workers on a broad scale. Further, a movement has to be built to fight racism and capitalism now and not be afraid to challenge racism in the working class communities themselves. Not some romantic white-led movement that refuses to deal with these issues.

Many white radicals just foolishly think that Black people are eager to work with whites, even after years of sellouts and racism. Well, some of us believe that these white activists must atone for their misdeeds in such past coalitions and prove that they are a reliable force that won’t sell out when white workers’ interests are threatened. History does not record many instances of white workers fighting to preserve the civil rights or the jobs of workers of color; I don’t know of many strikes by white dominated unions to stop the racist policy of ”last hired and first fired.”

Even though ”white racism hurts all workers” as they always cry in their placards, the fact is that most white workers believe that they currently have a better deal fighting for ”white rights” and their higher quality of life, than they do united with workers of color. So any movement or broad social change, whether labor union, community group, or whatever else, has to be ultimately a movement against racism and internal colonialism, not just blind calls for ”class unity”. Unity and autonomy have to be the watchwords.

Plantation Politics and the Left

There is this illusion among white radicals and progressives generally that if they declare themselves to be some sort of radical activist, this proves that they and their movements cannot possibly be racist, but as we have discussed, white racism works inside all social movements, even those who make the claim that they are opposed to or exist to fight racism. Part of the problem is that they believe that if they do not personally take any harmful action against a Black or non-white person, and maybe even give them a few privileges out of their bag of white privileges, that this proves that they must be excused from the standard definitions of a racist. Only problem is that there are not any standard definitions, no template, or other method to know if one is a racist other than what they do, and sometimes even that is not enough.

A white radical, like a white person generally have middle class privileges in a white racist society, and it does not matter about their personal beliefs. The white Left is brilliant at self-deception, and pointing at the right-wing as the racists we must crush is certainly one of them, but they also neglect to point the finger at themselves. They are also a force helping to oppress peoples of color, and keep them disempowered for the white masters on high to continue their rule. Their control over social change movements, their access to capital, the middle class lifestyle afforded them, and the mystique and social power of whiteness puts them in a favored position vis-a-vis poor people, who generally have nothing. So, just their very existence as white people means they profit from oppression, even if they don't make racist pronouncements or join the KKK or Tea Party.

White social change movements have always had a love-hate relationship with the rest of white society, but with the rise of the non-profit organizattons in 1970's, they became the keeper of the flame and the agent of the liberal wing of capitalism. After laws on corporate giving to non-profit social action movements were changed, a large wing of the primarily-white Left changed their political orientation to pacifism and Left civil rights activism. This was

“I can’t possibly be a racist…”

The very means of class control by the rich is the least understood. White supremacy is more than just a set of ideas or prejudices. It is national oppression. Yet to most white people, the term conjures up images of the Nazis or Ku Klux Klan rather than the system of white skin privileges that really undergird the Capitalist system in the U.S. Most white people, Anarchists and other radicals included, believe, in essence, Black people are ”the same” as whites and we should just fight around ”common issues” rather than deal with ”racial matters,” if they see any urgency in dealing with the matter at all.

Some will not raise it in such a blunt fashion. They will say that ”class issues should take precedence,” but it means the same thing. They believe it’s possible to put off the struggle against white supremacy until after the revolution, when in fact there will be no revolution if white supremacy is not attacked and defeated first. They won’t win a revolution in the U.S. until they fight to improve the lot of Blacks and oppressed people who are being deprived of their democratic rights, as well as being super-exploited as workers, and enslaved as a people.

Almost from the very inception of the North American socialist movement, the simple-minded economist position that all Black and white workers have to do to wage a revolution is to engage in a ”common (economic) struggle” has been used to avoid struggle against white supremacy. In fact, the white left has always taken the chauvinist position that since the white working class is the revolutionary vanguard anyway, why worry about an issue that will ”divide the class”? Historically Anarchists have not even brought up the matter of ”race politics,” as one Anarchist referred to it the first time this pamphlet was published. This is a total evasion of the issue.

The Capitalist bourgeoisie creates inequality as a way to divide and rule over the entire working class. White skin privilege is a form of domination by Capital over white labor as well as oppressed nationality labor, not just providing material incentives to ”buy off”

white workers and set them against Black and other oppressed workers. This explains the obedience of white labor to Capitalism and the State.

The white working class does not see their better off condition as part of the system of exploitation. After centuries of political and social indoctrination, they feel their privileged position is both just and proper and what is more, has been ”earned.” They feel threatened by the social gains of non-white workers, which is why they so vehemently opposed affirmative action plans to benefit minorities in jobs and hiring and to redress years of discrimination against them in employment settings. It is also why white workers have opposed most civil rights legislation for democratic rights.

Yet, it is the day-to-day workings of white supremacy that we must fight most vigorously. We cannot remain ignorant or indifferent to the workings of race and class under this system, so that oppressed workers remain victimized. For years, Black people have been ”last hired, first fired” by Capitalist industry. Further, seniority systems have engaged in open racial discrimination, and are little more than white job trusts. Blacks have even been driven out of whole industries, such as coal mining. White labor bosses have never objected or intervened for their class brothers, nor will they if not pressed up against the wall by white workers themselves.

As pointed out, there are material incentives to this white worker opportunism: better jobs, higher pay, improved living conditions in white communities, etc., in short what has come to be known as the ”white middle class lifestyle.” This is what labor and the left have always fought to maintain, not class solidarity, which would require a struggle against white supremacy. This lifestyle is based on the super-exploitation of the non-white sector of the domestic working class as well as countries exploited by imperialism around the world.

In America, class antagonism had always included racial hatred as an essential component, but it is structural rather than just ideological. The culture and the socioeconomic system of U.S. Cap-

nos and other oppressed people the scapegoat for the economic crisis, their real aim is to destroy the entire movement for social change, commit genocide, start an imperialistic war and turn workers into outright slaves of the State. Therefore, these fascist forces are a threat to all workers of every nationality. It must be explained that they only want to use white workers as pawns in their scheme to create a fascist dictatorship, and all workers must unite and fight back and overthrow the state if they are to be free. Now this is not easy, when there is so much opportunism and internal racism inside the Left itself, but it is something that must be done.

we will organize a tax boycott to force them to do it. It is part of the same battleground.

None other than Adolph Hitler has been quoted as saying: ”Only one thing could have stopped our movement. If our adversaries had understood its principle and from the first day had smashed with the utmost brutality, the nucleus of our new movement. ” Well, we should now take heed, and destroy the paramilitary right-wing and the electoral Tea party in this period now with a mass anti-fascist/anti-racist movement led by POC.

Another prong of our strategy is to organize among the workers and other oppressed sections of society with a program that addresses their needs. As has been said, the Klan and Nazis recruit among certain social layers - overwhelmingly, white youth who are hard-pressed by the economic crisis. These people see Blacks, Latinos, Asians, Gays, women and radical movements as a threat. They are racist, reactionary and potentially very violent. Fearful that they will lose the little they have, they buy the myth that the problems is ”those people” trying to steal their jobs, homes, future, etc., rather than the decay of the Capitalist system.

As long as there appears to be no alternative to fighting over a shrinking social ”pie,” the fascists, with their simple minded ”solutions,” will get a hearing among the degenerate elements of the working class. The only way to undercut the appeal of the right is to organize a Libertarian Socialist workers movement that can fight for and win the things that people need - jobs, decent housing and schools, health care, etc. This can demonstrate concretely that there is an alternative to the right wing’s poisonous ”solutions,” and it can win to the ranks of the workers’ movement some of those people attracted to the fascist movement.

In all areas of our organizing, we must carry out consistent revolutionary propaganda explaining Capitalism is responsible for unemployment, rising prices, rotten schools and housing and the rest of the decay we see around us. We must expose the fact that, while the Nazis, Klan and other right-wingers make Blacks, Gays, Lati-

italism are based on white supremacy; how then is it possible to truly fight the rule of Capital without being forced to defeat white supremacy?

The dual-tier economy of whites on top and Blacks on the bottom (even with all the class differences among whites) has successfully resisted every attempt by radical social movements. These reluctant reformers have danced around the issue however. While winning reforms, in many cases primarily for white workers only, these white radicals have yet to topple the system and open the road to social revolution. They won’t do it now.

The fight against white skin privilege also requires the rejection of the vicious identification of North Americans as ”white” people, rather than as Welsh, German, Irish, etc. as their national origin. This ”white race” designation is a contrived super-nationality designed to inflate the social importance of European ethnics and to enlist them as tools in the Capitalist system of exploitation. In North America, white skin has always implied freedom and privilege: freedom to gain employment, to travel, to obtain social mobility out of one’s born class standing and a whole world of Eurocentric privileges. Therefore, before a social revolution can take place, there must be an abolition of the social category of the ”white race.” (with few exceptions in this essay, I will begin referring to them as ”North Americans”)

These ”white” people must engage in class suicide and race treachery before they can truly be accepted as allies of Black and nationally oppressed workers; the whole idea behind a ”white race” is conformity and making them accomplices to mass murder and exploitation. If white people do not want to be saddled with the historical legacy of colonialism, slavery and genocide themselves, then they must rebel against it. So the ”whites” must denounce the white identity and its system of privilege and they must struggle to redefine themselves and their relationship with others. As long as white society, (through the State which says it is acting in the name of white people), continues to oppress and dominate all the

institutions of the Black community, racial tension will continue to exist and whites generally will continue to be seen as the enemy.

So what do North Americans start to do to defeat racial opportunism, white skin privileges and other forms of white supremacy? First they must break down the walls separating them from their non-white allies. Then together they must wage a fight against inequality in the workplace, communities and in the social order. Yet it is not just the democratic rights of African people we are referring to when we are talking about "national oppression." If that were the whole issue, then maybe more reforms could obtain racial and social equality in this society. But no, that is not what we are talking about.

Blacks (or Africans in America) are colonized. America is a mother country with an internal colony, made up of Black people how have been enslaved and oppressed for centuries. For Africans in America, our situation is one of total oppression. No people are truly free until they can determine their own destiny. Ours is a captive, oppressed colonial status that must be overthrown, not just smashing ideological racism or denial of civil rights. In fact, without smashing the internal colony first means the likelihood of a continuance of this oppression in another form. We must destroy the social dynamic of a very real existence of America being made up of an oppressor white nation and an oppressed Black nation, (in fact there are several captive nations).

This requires the Black Liberation movement to liberate themselves from a colonial existence, based on capitalism and this is why it is not just a simple matter of Blacks just joining with white Anarchists to fight the same type of battle against the State. That is also why Anarchists cannot take a rigid position against all forms of Black Nationalism (especially revolutionary groups like the original Black Panther Party, which was both radical and Socialist) even if there are ideological differences about the way some of them are formed and operate.

along with the professors, economists, philosophers and others in academia providing the ideological weaponry for the Capitalist offensive against the workers and oppressed people. Not all the racists wear sheets. These are the "respectable" racists, the new right conservatives, the Tea Party, which arose in 2009, who are far more dangerous than the Klan or Nazis because their politics have become acceptable to large masses of white workers, who in turn blame racial minorities for their problems. The Tea Party, especially, has changed mainstream politics and are respectable conservatives, the dominant political tendency of this period.

The Capitalist class has already shown their willingness to use this conservative movement as a smoke screen for an attack on the Labor movement, Black struggle and the entire working class poor. Many city public workers have been fired; schools, hospitals and other social services have been curtailed; government agencies have been privatized; welfare rolls have been cut drastically; and the budgets of city and state governments slashed. They have even taken away the traditional right of collective bargaining. Banks have even used their dictatorial powers to demand massive municipal and state budget cuts, and to even make entire cities default if they did not submit. In turn, the states were foolish enough to invest pension and operational funds in the stock market, so they stand on verge of going bankrupt. This bankruptcy even happened to New York City in the 1970s and in other major metropolitan areas since. So this is not just an issue of poor, dumb rednecks in hoods. This is about government and corporate "hoods" in business suits selling workers out to Wall Street.

A first step in organizing and preparing the working class in the economic crisis we face is to directly take on the right—wing threat. Repressive economic legislation by conservative politicians to punish the poor and working class must be defeated; taxes on the rich and major corporations must be increased, while taxes on the workers and farmers must be abolished. If the politicians will not do it,

a scapegoat: Blacks on welfare, high immigration rates, too many women in the work force and other simplistic targets to vent their frustrations at.

The Nazis, skinheads, the now defunct, Church of the Creator and the Klan are the most extreme right-wing racist/fascist organizations in the United States, but the militia movement and the so_-called Oath Keepers made up of police, and active duty military are in numerous states, and are clearly a right-wing death squad in the making. Today these groups are small and many liberals like the American Civil Liberties Union downplay the threat they represent, even to argue for their legal ”rights” to spread their racist venom. But these groups have a tremendous growth potential and could become a mass movement quickly, especially during an economic and political crisis into which we are now entering.

Basing themselves on alienated white social forces, the Nazis, Klan and other fascist groups are trying to build a mass movement that can hire itself out to the Capitalists at the proper moment and assume state power. When the Capitalist feel they might need an additional club to keep the workers and the oppressed in line, they will turn to the Nazis, Klan and similar right-wing organizations, with both money and support, in addition to strengthening the state police and military forces. If need be, the Capitalists will place them in power, (as they did in Spain, Germany and Italy in the 1920s and 1930s), so the fascists will smash the unions and other working class organizations; place Blacks, Latinos, Gays, Asians and Jews into concentration camps; and turn the rest of the workers into State slaves. Fascism is the ultimate authoritarian society when in power, even though it has changed its face to a mixture of crude racism and smoother racism in the modern democratic state.

Other right-wing forces have been on the rise in the last 25 years. They include ultra-conservative rightist politicians and Christian fundamentalist preachers, along with the extreme right section of the Capitalist ruling class itself - small business owners, talk show hosts like Rush Limbaugh and the Christian televangelists,

I am not asking white people to join with certain backward nationalists who think that whites are inherently evil or do not want their support, but North Americans must support the objectives of racially oppressed liberation movements and they must directly challenge and reject white skin privilege in the broader society. There is no other way, and there is no shortcut to support for resistance against racism; white supremacy is a huge obstacle to revolutionary social change in North America.

The Black revolution and other national liberation movements in North America are indispensable parts of the overall social revolution. North American workers must join with Africans, Latinos and others to reject racial injustice, Capitalist exploitation and national oppression. North American workers certainly have an important role in helping those struggles to triumph. Material aid alone, which can be assembled by white workers for the Black revolution, could dictate the victory or defeat of that struggle at a particular stage.

I am taking time to explain all this, because predictably some Anarchist purists or white progressives will try to argue me down that having a white movement is a good thing, ”why we’re active among white youth”, ”we’re fighting Wall Street capitalists”, or so on. Further they feel Blacks and other oppressed nationalities just need to follow them and this argument is just ”Marxist national liberation nonsense.”

Well, we know part of the reason for my calling for an anti-racist movement inside the Left itself is to challenge this chauvinist perspective right in the middle of our own movement. An Anti-Racist Liberation Support Movement would not exist just to fight Nazis. It would directly support the movements of color with material aid, and support the needs the movements of color to challenge and correct racist and doctrinaire positions on race and class within the Anarchist and Left radical movements. The fact is if white radicals cannot do that, then they cannot help to organize any wing of the working class, Black, POC, or white, and are of no use to anyone.

In fact, most white radical movements are enemies of the poor, peoples of color, and working peoples.

This is what must be recognized right now, when Occupy Wall Street and its solidarity movements have surfaced, making just these ”white rights” arguments and more, and are choking on the worst politics and internal racist dynamics. I will talk more about this later.

> ”Fascism is not to be debated…it is to be smashed… ”
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> — Buenaventura Durrutti, Spanish Anarchist revolutionary, 1936.

While I don’t believe fascist paramilitary movements are the greatest threats to people of color, or are on the verge of seizing state power, they are dangerous and must be confronted in the streets. I have always seen the struggle against paramilitary fascists movements as important, especially giving the Anarchists the ability to work in white working class communities, where I am convinced much of the ideological undermining of fascism has to take place.

This is where many working class anti-fascists will be drawn from. But this is not the main anti-racist force in society, that is the movement by peoples of color themselves, as I make clear in other articles in this book. In my mind, it is not possible to just debate trained killers; they must be stopped by any means necessary. I also believe that the government has to be exposed for coddling and using these forces to smash the Left and Anarchist tendencies, and liberation movements of color. As the Anti-Racist Action groups and many other activists have learned, merely beating up fascists without doing grassroots work does not make for a viable movement campaign. We have to go beyond these confrontations and reach the people susceptible to their fascist propaganda.

As Capitalist society decays, people will look for radical and total solutions to the misery they face. The Nazis and the Klan are among the few right-wing political forces that offer, or appear to offer, a radical answer to the current problems of society for the white masses. That these solutions are false will matter little to confused and hysterical people searching desperately for a way out of the socio-economic crisis the Capitalist world is facing. Sections of the middle class, better-off layers of the white working class, poor and unemployed white workers, all poisoned by the racism of this society, are easy prey for Nazi and Klan demagogues. They demand

Fascist Paramilitary movements

Anti-Racist Action: Who said you were an anti-racist ally?

For years now, it has been made apparent to me that the idea of white people creating and leading anti-racist movements of other whites is total nonsense. I have had to learn this through bitter experience from dealings with groups like the Anti-Racist Action (ARA), Love and Rage, and others in the Left that white people have no real clue how to fight racism and, if they do, they certainly are refusing to demonstrate it in any real fashion.

The apparent strategies of these groups is to chase after neo—Nazis, the Ku Klux Klan, the Church of the Creator and others to upstage them and disrupt their racist events. Although, I fully understand that we must confront fascist paramilitary movements, this alone is a flawed strategy however and no more eliminates racism than dancing in the streets, but it makes white people feel they are accomplishing something and it certainly helps with recruitment. But as a person of color, I do not feel this movement in any way ensures my safety from violence by right-wing paramilitaries or the police, the latter of which kill upwards of 1,000 people each year. Yes, I acknowledge the Klan is dangerous, but this is not the 1920s when they had millions of members.

The truth is these white radical groups deal with racism from a totally white perspective. They generally have no ties or accountability to the Black/POC communities and do not work with activists of color except in a strictly token and manipulative fashion. This leads to serious isolation from the communities of color and dangerously backward ideals about racism, which they feel are academic anyway.

Some years ago, I attended an ARA convention in Columbus, Ohio. Columbus is the home of Oho State University and at least a third of the city's population is Black, but there were hardly any other Black people in attendance, except one guy who called himself a "Black skinhead," a middle aged Black woman and a few other people of color, maybe 20 in all. It was clear to me that there had been no attempt to bring in folks from the Black communities in Columbus and other Ohio communities with substantial Black pop-

on right-wing paramilitary movements, rather the rise of the corporate state, the mass imprisonment of peoples of color, and paramilitary policing in communities of color.

of whiteness, white supremacy and white privilege must be ruthlessly dealt with among white people themselves and then they must be made accountable to peoples of color, instead of posturing as ”anti- racists above racism” themselves.

The truth is that I have not known many white political activists willing to deal with internal racism inside their movements, instead they prefer to posture as being without any racist ideology and practice and then allege themselves to be a serious force to organize against external racist right-wing movements. This is a gross error, which they must resolve before they really constitute a force against racism. But looking within is a hard, serious task most white male-dominated radical groups avoid like the plague, preferring to feel in their arrogance and superiority that they have the answers to all of society’s problems and that everyone else should just listen and follow them blindly. This is dishonest and opportunist.

It is important to recognize that no movement like this can be successful and truly liberating to all. But we must be honest and admit that such a movement is in line with the prevailing beliefs of this country that feels it can free white people, while leaving people of color in slavery. The first American Revolution was based on that belief, so it should be no surprise that many white radicals also believe that the coming revolution will be based on their white privileged concepts of revolutionary change.

They see themselves at the center of things and nothing can happen unless they lead it, but they refuse to challenge their own racism and privilege. Can white people be reeducated? Yes, but they must be willing to change and follow the leadership of folks who have suffered historically from racism and internal colonialism. The fact is what routinely happens to peoples of color, the murders, beatings by police, mass unemployment, community wide poverty, mass imprisonment, and record infant mortality, and so many other effects of structural racism and internal colonialism, rarely happen to white people, and that is why when it does to any degree, it is called fascism. Yet, since the 1960’s, white radicals have focused

ulations like Cleveland or Cincinnati. They did not even attempt to bring Black students off the OSU university campus.

Thus, you had this weird spectacle of hundreds of white people in a huge auditorium arguing and giving sanctimonious speeches about racism, from which most Blacks/POC were excluded. In attendance was every ”alphabet soup” leftist sect you can (or can’t) think of: SWP, ISO, IWW, SL, SLP, Love and Rage and so on, under the banner of Anti-Racist Action.

At some point during the Plenary Session, to which I was hurriedly added, while an older Black woman was speaking about her experiences with racism, a white radical jumped out of the crowd, rushed up to one of the microphones and blurted out: ”you shut up, we know what racism is!” This crystallized for me in instant what is wrong with such white-led ”anti-racist” groups and with mother country radicals generally. They have arrogantly convinced themselves because of academic study and reflection that they know what racism is, even better than the people who experience it daily. How they know that and what it is they claim to know is really an open question.

Racism is a lived experience by peoples of color, not something easily given to textbook study. To be an outcast, an object of derision and violence merely because of pigment, race, or custom is not something that most white people can grasp. White radicals may claim to understand it intellectually, but it is not the same. Yet to me the very idea that white people profess to know more about racism than peoples of color themselves is a really a peculiar type of arrogance. It is why white radicals are so disliked and distrusted in the Black community. Many times, they disrespect you, all while claiming to be allied with you or opposed to racial chauvinism. That is unacceptable.

It is interesting that almost none of the white people in attendance in the conference contradicted the disrupters or defended the Black woman’s right to speak. I can only remember myself and the other people of color shouting them down, along with one white

guy, Michael Novick, who was on stage with us. We afterwards became friends, but I recall coming away with a very bitter feeling overall. The next day, I pulled all the people of color together to issue a statement denouncing the incident, and calling for them to do the same. Because they were caught off-guard, the leaders of the conference agreed with our criticisms at the meeting, but then some weeks later they barred me from all subsequent ARA meetings for my "racial disruption." For years, I was an outcast. In fact, it has just been recently, since the old Columbus leadership has been discredited, that any ARA people would even speak to me, and then only the folks in Los Angeles, where Michael Novick is situated. I consider Novick one of the few anti-racist whites who "gets it", and whom I genuinely respect. While not everyone agrees with me now in ARA, at least because of Novick, they might listen and would not demonize me in his presence. Maybe we can even build a new movement in different principles and including peoples of color, instead of white radicals in command. Certainly, the L.A. ARA chapter is doing this already, with its alliance with the Black Riders Liberation Party, and other POC radicals.

For those of you reading this, please do not take these criticisms to mean that I think everyone in groups like ARA are enemies, or as "bad as the Klan," as some of my past critics in the group claimed. Someone even tried to claim that I just did not "like" white people, which is so absurd that it does not require a response. I do not at all believe that; never have believed it for that matter. But because of such experiences that I have observed or been victimized by, I now think it is useless to believe that white-led antiracist organizations can build a mass movement of just white peoples to end racism, or even for radical social change for that matter. The whole movement must change.

If it is not accountable to peoples of color, such a anti-racist movement is a detriment. These arrogant white-led movements I have been speaking of serve as proof positive that if the victims of racism are not at the front ranks of these anti-racist movements,

it will merely serve white interests and not be an ally of the Black and other oppressed peoples. Now that is as clear as I can make it.

The most effective anti-racist movement this country has ever seen, the Southern civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s, was led by activists from the Black community and the fact that it had deep ties to poor and working class Black peoples in the community, (in spite of its middle class leadership) allowed it to really conduct campaigns that altered the socio-economic and political face of the country and win major gains for Blacks and poor people.

It is little known by most, but true, that the Black working class community was in fact the backbone of the movement, even though the mass media has always concentrated on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. as the major figure in that movement. It was a movement of oppressed victims of racism, not white liberal or radicals who played a minor role.

This is contrary to today's movement, made up of primarily white middle class activists. Because of this situation, we can say this ensures today's anti-racist movement can only speak for white middle class people, not victims of racism, poverty, or police brutality. I feel there is definite lesson here for anyone who wants to see it. The question must be asked: is this an anti-racist movement at all, but in fact an example of a white rights movement?

Although I am clear white people cannot lead an anti-racist movement, without being accountable to peoples of color; I also feel they must confront their own racism and that of white people generally within the movement for social change, through internal seminars, study groups and other forms of political education, but mainly through serious struggle internally. This should take place in every progressive and radical organization, but especially within Anarchist and anti-racist organizations, which have serious problems with diversity and racial exclusion. The questions

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Lorenzo Kom'boa Ervin
The Progressive Plantation: racism inside white radical social change groups

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ridicule by the general Anarchist movement. This is disgraceful and does not speak well for Anarchism at all.

These groups are on their own, isolated and vilified. The Anarchist movement, which is overwhelmingly white, must start to understand that they need to do propaganda work among the Black and other oppressed communities to spread Anarchist ideals and they need to make it possible for non-white Anarchists to organize in their communities by providing them with technical resources (printing of zines, video and audio cassette production, etc.), organizer training and assisting them with financial resources to get on their feet. Whatever happened to mutual aid or is that just reserved for white radicals?

But just to show you how much resistance there is for even a semi-autonomous group of Anarchist POC: I had submitted written proposals a few years ago for the creation of Black/ People of Color organizing groups within the Industrial Workers of the World, the Love and Rage Revolutionary Anarchist Federation and other Anarchist groups, to try to bring in people of color. (I was the only Black person at the time in the entire IWW organization.) But this proposal was repulsed with shrill cries of ”separatism”, ”nationalism”, even ”racial disruption” by some of the really backward white Anarchists in those groups.

Then they attempted to characterize me as some ”kook”, making up false charges of racism and ”stirring up trouble.” So I know firsthand that while many white Anarchists may talk a good game about ”class unity’ and ”racial justice”, they ensure that everything is under white control and either discourage people of color from joining, or allow only the token voice of the stray person of color within these groups to be heard and then very softly. They do not want to be challenged or deal forthrightly with matters of race and class.

In fact, in another incident a few years ago, when the Industrial Workers of the World, the so-called radical Anarchist labor union, held their annual General Assembly in North Philadelphia,

an overwhelmingly impoverished Black and Latino inner-city neighborhood, an incident occurred which fully illustrates what I mean. All that day, they had closed the doors to the community and held their meeting just for the predominately white members. Then, the lights suddenly died and they had to go outside and conduct the remainder of the meeting on a small lot on the side of the building.

This also happened to be behind a low-income apartment complex and predictably when these white people were so loudly engaged in one of their inane arguments, residents of that apartment complex came out to see what was going on. When they approached and asked ”who are you people…what are you doing out here?” One of the Anarchists replied, ”We’ve got a right to be here! Lorenzo, tell them we’re alright!” At the mention of my name, I looked at them like ”what do you mean ’we,’ white man?” If they had kicked their butts, it would have been fine by me. I mean, the arrogance of such a reply! What ”right” did 50 weird-looking white people have to come into a neighborhood where they did not live and conduct their meeting? If I took 50 Black people for a meeting in a white neighborhood and did the same, the white folks there would no doubt have called the cops and had us arrested!

This racist arrogance of white radicals just shows us how racial exclusion works in the Anarchist movement. They never tried to involve neighborhood residents in the event before it occurred and even when challenged by these folks in their own neighborhood, they never invited them to take a seat and become part of the Assembly, maybe even sign up for membership. They did not want them and as I later saw it, clearly they did not want me either. I quit right after that. It was the final straw. I had been doing nothing but fighting racism in the so-called ”one big union” ever since I had been a member anyway.

I have seen years of such racial exclusion, which has made me realize that, although things are beginning to change in the Anarchist movement, it is not the result of white Anarchists finding ”enlightenment.” Change is happening because Anarchist people of

color are beginning to organize their own e-mail lists on the intemet, are starting their own political collectives, are even planning for a founding conference of an Autonomist People of Color Federation, a continental network to help organize all those APOC in the U.S. and Canada into some type of potent political tendency. They are realizing what I finally realized years ago: only if we are strong and organized will we get any respect. They may not succeed, but they are willing to try and refuse to accept a white-dominated movement which demeans them, and does not even speak to their existence.

The very discussion of this APOC movement raises new possibilities for autonomous work in communities of color and makes Anarchists of color realize just how neglected our own communities have been and that we need to make a special effort to reach our own peoples. But this does not mean that Anarchists of color will or should refuse to work with whites on issues of mutual concern, but that they should definitely never do ”stoop work” for white radicals, that is recruiting other POC for white Anarchist/ radical organizations, carrying out their program instead of our own and covering up for their organizational weaknesses.

They don’t deserve it and the real issue here is creating an autonomous POC tendency and dealing with all white groups from a position of strength, independence and mutual respect, which only autonomy can provide. We can no longer put up with any sort of racist garbage in the overwhelming white Anarchist movement, or let them posture as being inherently ”anti-racist”. So in response to those who want to know: there is racism in the Anarchist movement alright, it’s just cloaked as ideological non-conformance. But the issues as I see it, is not to waste time arguing with white Anarchists and their racism. No, we need to build unity among ourselves first and then demand our rightful place in the Anarchist and Socialist movements.

Class Unity and POC Autonomy is the only real solidarity

If there is going to be real class unity or solidarity, there is no way forward for either white Anarchists, Socialists, or autonomous people of color except to recognize the necessity of organizing movements based on new conceptions of class and race. We have to reject the hypocritical Anarchist or white radical rhetoric that autonomist movements are somehow based mechanically on race and that a ”mainstream” white radical movement is based on a superior conception of class or political unity. The conditions of Blacks and peoples of color require a new political assessment, and must be made a cardinal part of any radical tendency.

We demand our right to be culturally and politically different and further demand that white Anarchists/ radicals respect our right to disagree on political questions and to take a separate path based on one party’s interests in opposition to the other. I am not talking about racial separatism, nor will I give in to yet another useless coalition, which like most Black-White coalitions have been organized with the whites truly dominating because of their access to superior resources and by having more political access.

I am talking about a situation where POC autonomist forces unite with white radicals when there is unity on a particular political issue, but then they must have respect for our autonomy at other times when we disagree or want to go our own way. So people of color creating autonomous movements, instead of just joining white radical groups, is a reflection of their own racial exclusion inside white-dominated movements, as much as it is about local organizing, cultural autonomy, or political differences.

Now one thing white radicals must give up is the idea that the whole struggle hinges around white workers on their own deciding en masse to reject capitalism and racism. This fable will supposedly occur as the result of some kind ”catastrophic event” or social crisis that brings out the ”revolutionary marrow” of white workers, according to white radicals. The truth is that there has been a series of major depressions, two world wars and other catastrophic events and it has not caused a white-led revolution in 400 years of

the American Republic, unless you count that series of events. during the 1770's, which did free white folks from England colonialism while they themselves continued to hold slaves!

The fact is white folks in America have been a good guard dog for the stolen wealth of American capitalism, so long as they got their share. White immigrants were left out of the white "club" and were considered "dangerous" foreigners. They were subjected to the cruelest class and social conditions. In the early 19th century, the White Anglo Saxon Protestants looked down their noses at Italians, Poles, Jews and East Europeans. These immigrants weren't considered white, but "social vermin," unpatriotic and a "dangerous economic class." However, when these estranged peoples got white political power and respectability, they were given a form of ethnic entre'. Over the course of time, after having been accepted or worked their way into the "club," they adopted the same prejudices towards Blacks and other peoples of color, as the worst WASP cultural snob had held against them.

White radicals know this, but many persist with this fiction of a "heroic white working class", who are supposedly so tolerant and willing to work on an equal basis with Blacks. The truth is that there are no saviors coming from the white mother country to save Black people. We are responsible for our own liberation. They may be white allies who will work with us, but we will let only them work with us for equality, mutual aid and self-respect, not white self—interest.

History has proven that only when the slaves or the oppressed peoples themselves rebel, can the whites in sympathy support them, perhaps enough to turn the tide. The very idea that they (whites and peoples of color) are coming together because they "like each other" or the whites want to "show they are not racist" is the most sophomoric liberalism, rather than any revolutionary ideology at all

Only when one understands that she or he is part of a revolutionary movement to restructure society, even if it only wins immediate

gains in the early stages, can the talk of functional ”unity” be given any credence whatsoever. Of course, such a movement cannot be white-led, which has its own tremendous negative implications and results. Rather than swallowing a false or romantic view, I will say that the only way Black/POC and white people can really work in cooperation is when there is shared leadership, interests and risk taking inside a mass movement for racial and social justice, rather than in civil society generally

A white-led movement cannot ever be allowed to usurp the basic role of people of color themselves to fight for their own freedom. The paternalistic idea that whites know what is best for peoples of color is virulent in the European, American, UK and South African Anarchist and Left movements. They even try to get members of color to submit to a political ”loyalty oath” around issues of race, so that it will not become an internal issue. Let’s be honest: like many white people in a racist society generally, they try not to discuss such issues unless they firmly control the agenda and format. Again, they fear a challenge to their own racism.

For the most part, not only do the white radicals tolerate tokenism, rather than empowerment of POC in the Anarchist movement, they have wholly different ideas about fighting racism. They do not deal with the state’s mass imprisonment of the poor and Black youth, police murder in the streets, infant mortality, or massive poverty in communities of color. Instead, they see racism as discrimination in individual cases, marginal vigilante racist groups, or just something that the ruling class ”uses” as a strategy to split Black from white. But these are concerns about racism from a white perspective, not from those actually victimized.

So, activists of color must bring the issue to them, based on our political understanding, experiences and based on our actual condition of oppression. We must be clear that although we may believe in many things together, we must lead the fight for our own freedom. White people still don’t fully understand you can only build a mass movement for total social change when the poor and

oppressed peoples of color are leading it, not privileged white workers and activists. We can work with anyone, but only on conditions of principled unity and shared interest, not because of liberal racial clichés of… ”it’s a good thing we’re all together in the same room”, ”we’ve got to love one another”… or ”we’re all in the same boat.” The Black movement and the movements of other peoples of color need allies in its battle against the racist Capitalist class - not the usual White liberal or phony ”radical” support, but genuine revolutionary working class support and solidarity, otherwise called ”mutual aid” by Anarchists. The basis of such unity however must be principled and be based on class interest, rather than liberal ”guilt tripping,” ”do good-ing” or opportunism and manipulation by liberal or radical political parties.

The needs of the oppressed people must be the most important consideration, because they want genuine support, not fakery or leftist rhetoric. There is much distrust of White radicals among Black people because of years of these radicals’ misconduct in communities of color and improper dealings with activists of color. White radicals have always seen the issues revolving around their concepts of the white working class ”coming to its senses”, recognizing its ”historical mission as a leading class and saving us all”. How noble, but how wrong!

I believe that Blacks and people of color in America throughout the world must begin to organize autonomous movements among their own peoples. They cannot defer to white activists. No one will hear and act in response to our cries for help and no one can do that work in our communities that we alone can only do.

One reason there are so few Blacks or Anarchists of color is because the movement provides no means to reach people of color, win them over to Anarchism or Socialism, and help them organize themselves. This must change if we want the social revolution to take place in America and if we want North American Anarchism or Socialism to be more than just another ”white rights” movement. I have never understood why others have not had a problem with

show that it is Black, Native, and Hispanic workers suffering more than any others in this society, not white people. This goes all the way back to racial slavery, land theft, colonialism, and genocide of the natives.

So, that historical and political contradiction between North American Blacks/POC/Indigenous is what is propelling the conflict between them and the government today. They are forced to fight just to survive, and they live under the most dismal circumstances, whether an inner city ghetto, a barrio, or reservation. They are an internal colony of the white government. Because white people do not have such a contradiction, theirs is a purely a class contradiction.

They are not a vanguard revolutionary force, and are incapable on their own to lead a revolution to free everyone. In fact, if we look at the internal contradictions of a movement like Occupy Wall Street, we see that they can only put forward a middle class pacifist line, which does not unite with POC liberation struggles.

Once again, the oppressed peoples of colour under this system will rise up and radicalize the entire society around their demands, and the oppression of their peoples, and fight for our liberation. The only issue is if white radicals will be allies or enemies.

by Lorenzo Kom'Boa Ervin

this. The failure of anarchism and socialism to build a racially and ethnically diverse movement is one of its greatest failings. It may yet doom the entire movement to defeat.

So Anarchists [and progressives] will have to get their own house in order before they can effectively build an anti-racist movement to educate or organize other whites, and unite with POC on a principled basis. Because of internal racism, too many activists of color are starting to talk critically about the class and race flaws in the contemporary Anarchist and anti-globalization movements for it to continue to be ignored. Inviting peoples of color into the movement, but on a basis where they are fully empowered, is absolutely essential. This should be elementary, not a problem to be debated endlessly, or evaded altogether.

Building an Anti-Racist Liberation Support Movement

Most white radicals believe that it is their struggles and the resistance of white workers for better wages and against capitalism, which is really the force for revolution. This however, is false consciousness, they may be exploited workers, but they are not oppressed as a people and kept as a captive internal colony of the white government. Their struggles have been primarily around industrial trade unions as a force for radical change, (or so they believe), now it seems to be around a number of cultural and economic movements that primarily effect white middle class workers. The truth is the white working class fights for accumulation of resources and wages at the expense of workers of color. They have stood behind almost every discriminatory and oppressive policy of the labor movement and the government. It is only because of the Civil Rights movement of the 1960's that this began to change.

Even so, they never supported Black radical labor unions in the automobile plants in Detroit and other cities during the 1960's and early 1970's, [and gave very little support to Chicano-Mexicano field workers in the agribusiness industry in the Southwest]. It was those autonomous Black-led unions that actually represented the Black workers and all workers in those plants, where the UAW conspired with the auto companies to protect a white job trust that engaged in racial discrimination, while zeroing in on Black workers for the worst forms of repression and harassment. The white Left built no strong support movement for them, and stood by and passively watched them get destroyed, just as they had done with the Black Panther Party, when it was being smashed by COINTELPRO.

Since slavery, it has been the Black/POC workers whose forced and exploited labor have built the United States, not white workers [with very few exceptions]. They have certainly caught the most hell, which continues to this day, they have depression levels of unemployment and poverty, 2-3 times that of whites. They are suffering more from being driven to crimes of survival due to the economy, and thus more imprisonment, up to 10 times more than that of white people. In fact, every leading economic and social indicator

Conclusion - The Struggles of Peoples of Color and their hostile relationship with the state is the Revolution, Not White Radicalism

For years it has been known there are some very simple components to an anti-racist tendency on the Left. The type of organization needed must be a ”mass” organization working to unite all workers and poor people in common class struggle, but that it must also be able to recognize the duty to support and adopt the special demands of the Black and other non-white peoples as those of the entire working class. It must challenge white supremacy on a daily basis in both white working class communities and radical social change organizations; it must refute racist philosophy and propaganda and must counter racist mobilizations and attacks, with armed self-defense and street fighting, when necessary. The objective of such a mass movement was to win elements of the white working class over to an anti-white supremacy, class-conscious position; to unite the -entire- working class; and to directly confront the right wing. This program, must function in conjunction with preexisting struggles in communities of color, not as a white Left vanguard dominating the entire movement.

So I have never called for a white-led or ”white rights” organization like those I have criticized. The cooperation of and solidarity of all workers and poor people is essential for full social revolution, not just its privileged white sector. They must be willing to follow the lead of poor and oppressed workers and activists of color, as was done during the civil rights movement of the 1960s. That is something that the white Left has not been able to do and is why they set up their own all-white groups, which in no time at all lapse into liberalism and racial exclusion. As revolutionaries, we must always understand our objective is to overthrow the Capitalist state and its rulers, and that we must live the politics we preach. Racism is intolerable. This movement must have the potential to deconstruct the racist capitalist state and construct an entirely new society on anti-authoritarian principles. It has to go beyond white Left campaigns of the past, or it’s just empty rhetoric.

So I am proposing something different: an anti-racist tendency as a political movement to change society itself. This would be a

race and class based revolutionary movement, not content to sit around and read books, elect a few Black politicians or ”friends of Labor” to Congress or the State Legislature, write protest letters, circulate petitions, or other such tame liberal reform tactics. It also would not be concerned with white middle class leftist issues like ”Nazi youth music”, the so-called ”vanguard role” of white workers, animal rights, world trade reform and other white rights campaigns.

For years, I have asked these white radicals: What about racial profiling, mass imprisonment of Blacks/Latinos and the poor, police murder and brutality, etc. and other hallmarks of a racist society? Why are you not uniting with Black and other non-white peoples? I have never got a satisfactory response to these questions. This proposed campaign I am speaking of is around issues that could also act as a pole of attraction for peoples of color to this movement, because they directly affect them. Further, raising issues of the crushing of the human rights of poor and working people of color, especially the millions of homeless and unemployed in the inner cities could push it further than the agenda of the old civil rights movement, which only tepidly raised issues of racial discrimination and exploitation of the poor to demand reforms of capitalism, but shied away from anything that sounded vaguely like ”Socialism”.

We must be willing to fight in the streets with the poor, racially oppressed and economically down-pressed peoples, because that is who we are. It would take the examples of the early radical labor movements like the IWW, as well as the later Civil Rights/ Black Power movements of the 1960s and the Welfare Rights movement, to show that only direct action tactics of confrontation and militant protest will yield any results at all.

We also have to study the examples of the 1992 Los Angeles and 2001 Cincinnati rebellions, which show once again that, while poor people will revolt, there need to be powerful allies extending material aid and resistance information. These allies can also start resistance and support campaigns in the white communities. We

ally destroy a movement on its own, and radical history is full of the death of many such past coalitions.

Institutional racism inside a revolutionary tendency, can lead to total discredit of that movement, even with its lofty goals of solidarity or class unity. It can create enemies against it in the ranks of peoples of color, and in other segments of the working class. It is not too strong to say that most white radical organizations simply don’t want to give up their racist domination of the social change movement. They want to continue to mislead white workers, and betray workers of color, as they have always done. In order to make an authentic revolutionary movement, they must be overthrown and defeated. We must kill these bogus movements off before they do irreparable harm, and destroy all the radical social movements in North America, especially those liberation movements led by peoples of color.

Both anti-racist whites and people of color activists alike must ”declare war”, or wage relentless struggle against internal racism, and make it clear that it is totally intolerable, an enemy that must be overthrown. Because neither individual anti-racist whites or peoples of color can effectively wage a struggle against racism inside majority white organizations, they must build a powerful internal ”united front”, be it a ”de-colonization” society, anti-racist pressure group, semi-autonomous POC network, or other movement. First, they have to educate themselves and others they can get to work with them on the dynamics of internal racism, and be actively involved in countering all acts of such racism.

This includes the racist denigration of POC and their racist exclusion, but also a situation where the organization is refusing to raise the issues effecting communities of color: record unemployment, mass imprisonment, crippling poverty, infant mortality and other issues which effect those communities much more thoroughly than whites. The whole question of white privilege must be raised, but demystified as a class issue, not merely xenophobia by individual whites, and the anti-racists and all in solidarity with them, must struggle against it and take no prisoners. There should be constant political education internally about the oppression of workers of color, and that they are a social vanguard to radical change in North America.

Revolutionary anti-racists are abolitionists, they wish to abolish internal racism inside their own movements, but also national oppression in the white society. They must take a hard line: not excuse or protect it by flowery language, leniency, cronyism, or the rationale that it must be ended in society before it can be stopped in white radical social movements themselves. Anyone engaged in racist behavior must be summarily dismissed from the group, further the central demands of the entire movement have to be constructed around the issues of structural racism, white supremacy, and class super-exploitation of peoples of color. Racism can make a fool or coward of those afraid to fight and destroy it, it can liter-

need to also show there is an existing mass movement to take it to the next step and spread the insurrection on a long-term basis.

For the most part, the Anarchist and Socialist movement still does not even deal with police murder or brutality, poverty, or certain kinds of ”uncomfortable” racist issues like criminalization of youth of color, except in a peripheral way as political rhetoric. I have not seen the various Anarchist Black Cross or Anti-Racist Action groups, or the white led Socialist parties deal with the disproportionate imprisonment of Black people in the U.S., (10 times that of white people), the frequent police murders of Black civilians, or the racial profiling of the millions of Black people each year.

So, we must also challenge our allies in the Anarchist, anti-globalization movements, and ”Occupy Wall Street” movement to both act as true political allies and serve as a source of material support, while still respecting our autonomy. This is why I am continually saying that it is necessary for white workers to defend the democratic rights and gains of non-white workers in the general society, instead of just fighting for white rights on the job and/ or white issues of social advancement.

Finally, to be clear this anti-racist movement is a coalition of peoples of color with white allies. But it has to be recognized as a cardinal principle by all, that oppressed peoples have a right to self-determination, including the right to run their own organizations and liberation struggle. Most importantly, inside the anti-racism movement itself the peoples of colour have to take the lead, even if they share it with others. The victims of racism know best how to fight back against it.

The Anarchists, Socialists and other white radicals must recognize this and help build a millitant anti-racist group, which would be both a support group for the Black revolution and a mass-organizing center to unite the class of poor peoples and oppressed.

It is very important to wrest the mass influence of the racial equality movement out of the hands of the left-liberal Democratic

wing of the ruling class. The left liberals like Jessie Jackson or Al Sharpton may talk a good fight, but as long as they are not overthrowing Capitalism and smashing the state, they will betray and sabotage the entire struggle against racism.

The strategy of the left-liberals is to deflect class consciousness into strictly race consciousness and then call for mere enforcement of the civil rights laws by the federal government. For the most part, they refuse to appeal to class material interests of the U.S. White working and middle classes to support Black rights and as a result allow the right-wing to capitalize unopposed on the latent racist feeling among whites, as well as on their economic insecurity. Jackson did this during his political campaigns, but only to win votes for the Democrats. They do not even try to organize the Black working class poor.

The kind of movement I am proposing will step in the breach and attack white supremacy and dismantle the very threads of what hold Capitalism together. Without the mass white consensus to the rule of theAmerican state and the system of white skin privelege, Capitalism could not continue to function without interruption. Anarchists and Socialists have to stop giving lip service to all this.

The way they apply it, ”race treason” is a farce, it is just the latest political fad since whites don’t have to really be inconvenienced or challenged. However, true anti-racist politics challenge the notion of whites doing anything less than putting their own lives and future on the line for a new society and dismantling a capitalist system which while it brutally oppresses peoples of color, and exploits all of us as working people.

Declaring War on internal Racism inside white social justice movements

will. The only question is how many white people will unite with us in genuine class unity, mutual aid, and with the same fervor for total change?

Building Diversity in the Left, building support for POC liberation movements

Having railed against the current state of the Anarchist and Socialist movements, which is based entirely too much on white conceptions of the struggle, we now must talk about what we can do to fix this.

First, Anarchists especially, and Socialist radicals need to break away from so much close identification with Punk rock and the white youth culture that supports it. This has been a two-edged sword for years - bringing in many new recruits, but also trapping Anarchist and radical politics in a white cultural milieu, which is hostile to everything else-. I say this even though I am mindful that many young Chicanos also got involved as Anarchists through cultural association with this musical form. We need to recognize and become in other youth cultural scenes like hip-hop, but even Acid jazz, Salsa and other cultural forms.

Although this is one sure reason why this movement is so white dominated at this time, there are others of equal importance. The most obvious thing is that the predominately-white Anarchists have never recruited in communities of color, nor tried to act as a pole of attraction for Black/POC activists. For instance, they generally do not hold forums in communities of color, nor even distribute literature at Black bookstores or community centers in Chicano or Asian neighborhoods, or on Native reservations. They make no real attempt to connect with those communities and even when there are POC groups or individuals sympathetic to Anarchism or Socialism, generally do not connect with them either. This makes no sense and I have criticized it for years. It is cultural suicide and political chauvinism. Somebody else called it ”white cultural nationalism” and I am inclined to agree.

As I have pointed out endlessly to various Anarchist and Socialist groups, you must have an organizational platform people of color can identify with - not just white middle class issues like radical environmentalism, animal rights, veganism, anti-automobile causes, ”Nazi youth music” and other white campaigns, if you want their support and active participation.

Besides just the current issues around Occupy Wall Street, the white radical Left itself in this period is riddled with racism, opportunism, class treachery, and internal oppressions(s) which must be recognized and smashed, if it is to be any force for radical change of society. I went back and reviewed the stuff from my earlier book ”Anarchism and the Black Revolution”, part of which is a critique of internal racism and racist exclusion in Anarchism specifically, but socialism generally, and it is pretty much the same criticism I am making now against the ”Occupy” tendency. I had done this as part of the research for ”The Political Plantation”.

Since we know this is a deep seated problem inside White radical social justice organizations, this leads us to the unmistakable conclusion that white Left-led tendencies cannot lead us to revolution, just political reform benefiting themselves as a class primarily. They are the Left wing of the white middle class, no matter what rhetoric they use to describe themselves and their goals. The OWS is a perfect example, but before that, the anti-globalization movement, and even further back Socialist and Communist parties have all succumbed to racism and white supremacy. More specifically, it all raises this question: after a new society is created will it be another unjust white-dominated one, with only political or economic differences from the previous capitalist society, but still maintaining white supremacy?

After we have shed blood, sweat and tears in response to this white-led revolutionary struggle, will Black/POCs have to fight all over again for their own liberation, because we will have once again been betrayed? We are not fighting to replace one white master for another, nor to be put back into the ghetto. There is no way not to conclude that we need a social revolution with Black/POC leadership to destroy this system entirely and thoroughly, leaving no traces of racism or capitalism, rather than have the very classes and peoples who have historically oppressed us in charge of our fate. I do not believe or argue that white people are inherently evil, rather that if we do not organize for our own freedom, nobody else

Is Opportunism really the issue? No condescending Saviors

People who are suffering from massive imprisonment (one million Black youth and adults); who see their friends and relatives murdered by the police; who are ill nourished, housed and clothed; who are forced to live in ghettoes and subjected to daily racism, are not too concerned with chip mills, back to nature, the welfare of whales, or testing of animals in labs. This does not mean that these things are not important, but they are middle class white folks' issue, not that of a desperate urban Black or Brown working class. You white folks might get mad at me for saying this, but it is the truth. It is race and class privilege.

Even as much as white activists would like to see numerous people of color join their activist groups, this most likely won't happen. One they are given no voice or respect in white movements. Even those interested in Anarchism or Socialism will probably join or create their own POC groups and then deal with white activist groups from a position of co-equal organizations.

This is actually a better proposition for all involved. Dealing with a group, rather than as an individual, for joint operations means larger numbers of participants of color and it also means mutual respect and joint inclusion in a project planning for the POC. It means an equal voice, rather than white control and being forced to follow behind somebody else's prepared agenda.

An autonomous people of color organization, of sufficient size and strength ensures the ability to reshape the entire movement and end internal racial exclusion, as well as other possible forms of misconduct. It can bring in considerable numbers of people of color and extend Anarchism and Socialism to peoples and areas where it has never gone. I believe that it is necessary for Anarchism and Socialism to be extended to common people, other than middle class white dropouts/activists. A successful social revolution without Blacks/poor peoples of color simply ain't even happening, it is defeatism.

Until the anti-globalization movement and Occupy Wall Street movement unites with Black/POC and poor folks around a broader

agenda than just reform of Wall Street, the World Trade Organization and other capitalist institutions, it will be nothing more that an ”white rights” movement, which ”advocates” in the West for the poor and Third World peoples, but cringes in fear and distaste if they ever meet one. They are just ”reluctant reformers” of the international capitalist system at this point; fearing ”violent revolution,” they rigidly advocate for Western style nonviolent social change.

Although making a lot of disruptive noise, they are doing nothing that fundamentally challenges capitalism as a world power and will soon start to run aground based on these limitations and the internal contradictions of their weak race and class politics. They will learn just as other social movements have that the privileged upper classes cannot speak for the poor, white people cannot advocate for peoples of color and that fundamentally you cannot reform cancer. It must be destroyed.

So, although I think it is important to unite with such campaigns on the short-term basis, they should receive unsparing criticism if they do not listen to those of us on the bottom. They will not make the revolution anyway and they are not truly anti-capitalist. They are merely a transitional movement until something more militant comes along. I talk more about this in the next section.

play with yourself and others. It does not have to be this way at all, of course, in fact now you have the chance to prove them all wrong. Fight racism and colonialism!

8. Make sure that when a broad-based social change movement or project is being created, that the group contacts and attempts to bring in POC groups at the planning stages, so it can be known if racism is a problem from the very beginning, and to give them a voice.

9. Use your white privilege and build an anti-racist liberation support movement, accountable to POC communities and organizations.

10. Do not hire, or allow the group to hire Black and other POCs just for window dressing in social change movement, but give them the power and room to do their jobs without interference from jealous or racist members of the group. Make sure that they have all the support and backing of the group, and do not have to demean or prostitute themselves to keep the job. Do not allow them to be fired without any support or struggle.

These are not infallible suggestions for either nonprofit progressive groups or white radical organizations, and they are certainly not the answer in every situation you will encounter. You may not even be able to reform or transform your group into an actual anti-racist organization, and if not, you must work to smash it, rather than let it stay alive and continue to commit crimes against the people.

Sometimes that is the only thing to be done, and if it is, brace yourself and fight. What you cannot do is just give up, or run away in a cowardly fashion. It seems too many white activists do this first, and take off without resolving any conflict. This kind of disgusting performance does no one any good. You didn't stand up, and you did not have the courage of your convictions. You left the racist mess intact, and played the role that the other whites in control expect out of you, you surrendered to racism. They can smugly know that you can't handle confrontation, and do not really support POC when it comes down to it. It's just an act or mind game you

Critique of the Anti-Globalization Movement

Some feel that the anti-globalization movement is one of the best anti-capitalist/ radical projects to come along in years to involve Anarchists and Socialists as a core group. Its tactics of blockading meetings of the capitalist world's political and financial ministers had created a deep sense of crisis among the rich and powerful ever since the Seattle 1999 protests erupted. These tactics harken back to the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the labor protests of the 1930's, in the broadness of the coalition and tactics to disrupt the status quo. But it has serious flaws as well. For instance, some of the environmental groups in the coalition are willing to settle for mere reforms of the multinational corporations and new government protective regulations of wilderness areas; there are also NGO's who are part of the movement which are nothing but government-created liberal trade lobbies; some of the labor groups have a narrow trade union agenda and in addition, there are a variety of religious and pacifist groups opposed to anything but government-managed "peaceful protests". But for myself and other activists of color, the worst flaw is that the movement is so white and middle class, although this has changed over the last decade.

Like the Anarchist and Progressive movements generally, it has not made any real efforts to connect with Black/POC neighborhoods in the cities that it has organized in, not raised issues in a fashion that make Blacks or peoples of color interested in the movement. For instance; it talks about international financial institutions like the World Bank, World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund and how they are forcing 3rd world governments to adopt austerity policy and starve their people. They also talk about those countries being victimized by IMF/World Bank banking policies that have plunged the countries in deep debt to Western bankers. But they don't seem to realize that the same institutions are responsible for unemployment, homelessness, the shutting down of industries and massive poverty in the inner cities of the United States and other Western countries. They just don't

1. Never tolerate racism in any form. This includes racist jokes among the whites, harassing POC, covering up racist incidents [no matter how miniscule]. We cannot allow racist culture to take over an organization, it makes hypocrites of all white activists in social justice and Left radical tendencies. Such people have to be challenged and expelled from the movement.

2. Make sure all POC inside your organizations have a full voice, and internal organization of their own, and assure them that the anti-racist whites have got their back.

3. Make sure that there is an independent anti-racist movement inside the organization which can put maximum pressure on the leaders of the organization to make major changes, or else close down shop.

4. Never back away or withdraw from a racist group, you have the absolute duty to stay and fight within a racist structure to transform it, or smash it in the internal fight over racism. You must organize others to work with you, both whites and POC, and build a powerful caucus which can check the leaders and racist members of the board.

5. Force the group to deal with anti-racism/anti-colonialism as the core concern of the group, no matter what else is on the agenda.

6. Make the group unite with the political agenda of POC, and their liberation movements, and force the group to provide these POC organizations with material and political support, without any preconditions.

7. Make the white social justice group raise issues that effect communities of color, and not just a white rights agenda.

Perhaps you belong to one of these types of white progressive social groups or white radicals that I have described, what can you do to dismantle racism within?

First, is to ask how is the group governed? Who created it? Where does its money come from? How many peoples of color belong to the group? Do they have a voice in operations and full rights of participation? Who really makes the decisions in the group? These are just a few preliminary questions to understand if you have internal racism in the group. One question will usually lead to another, until you arrive at the decisive question as to whether this group has a problem with internal racism.

Next is to examine how the group was created. Was it just founded by white people? What do POC in the community think of the group? Have there been a number of racist incidents in the group's history? If so, how were they handled? Does the group have any written anti-racist policy for employees or group members, have they ever been used, and how was the POC employee or member treated? Again, just some of these can lead to others.

Does the group claim to be anti-racist? How and why do they make the claim? Do they empower the white people over the POC? Do the POC members have their own caucus, and how do the whites feel about this? What anti-racist training has the board and all of its members ever had? What was the result? Did anything change? How did POC members feel about it? Do they think racism still exists inside the group? Was an independent internal anti-racist movement created to deal with racism? What has it ever done, and how did it organize?

These are important questions, but they only let you get some understanding of the depth of the problem, not solve it or fight internal racism.

Here are 10 tips to transform your white social justice movement or center:

get it! They support economic human rights campaigns as long as it involves countries thousands of miles away, while ignoring those arising on their own doorstep.

The movement has to re-evaluate its political direction and should broaden its base by including the inner city poor and peoples of color, not just radical environmentalists, rank-and-file labour, students and Anarchist groups. Welfare mothers, prisoners, Black community organizers, poor people in the barrio, on Indian reservations and grassroots folks of all sorts, could take equal part, if this were deemed a priority by leaders and activists in the movement.

I feel the Anarchist people of color movement should just muscle its way in, as they started to do in Quebec City, Canada, in 2001, when the Free Trade of the Americas summit was held. As activists of color within the Anarchist and anti-globalization movements, we have to demand that our issues be respected and that the poor and peoples of color be given an equal place in the movement. We have been invisible for too long.

This participation can only strengthen the overall movement and give it an even harder edge when so many of capitalism's poorest victims take part. One thing for sure, they will not be so willing to compromise as the white middle class elements do, they have nothing to loose. Just think; a movement now, which can disrupt the smooth flow of capitalist planning in Seattle and other cities, would then become one, when it unites all of capitalism's victims, powerful enough to begin to take over and dismantle the entire international finance system. We go from a movement of thousands to millions worldwide in a campaign capable of reconstructing society and the world economy itself. Let's get busy, we've got a world to win!

Occupy Wall Street: internal racism run amok!

What should I do about White racism inside My Organization?

group in 20 years" and we should not impede it with questions of "racial politics." No white-led social movement is more important than racial oppression in its very ranks, as this has killed many a previous movement that pleaded "class unity" as a cloak to hide its racism, and ultimately this opportunism fractured the movement. This one will be no different.

These anti-racist white trainers whom I refer to as the "blind leading the blind" just don't get it. They serve no useful function at all, and perpetrate a fraud upon the movement. They dishonestly sell out to internal racism, and provide no relief to the POC who are suffering from the hands of racists inside such movements. They reinforce racism, rather than dispel it, and it merely proves the absolute treachery and bankruptcy of white led racist training. They ain't building no new nation, they're trying to put POC on the new Progressive Plantation, while they absolve white people of their crimes against the oppressed peoples of color.

You cannot put internal racism off to another day, because we create visions of the new society in the type of organizations and movements we build now. So, I denounce all of these so-called white-led and created anti-racist training programs as a fraud that does not decolonize white radical social movements, but act as an accomplice to their treachery.

In order to explain the problems of Occupy Wall Street, it is necessary to recite my contacts with the movement. First, I had been advocating for months on my FaceBook page that a movement against government austerity policies and corporate exploitation by the capitalists would come

into existence, and we would see the kind of resistance displayed in Spain, Greece, and the UK, among other countries that fought tooth and nail. So when I first heard of the OWS movement first taking action in New York, I was thrilled. I thought that I would see a mass of Black and POC workers, and others united in a mass movement against the rich, and their unemployment and austerity policies.

Since Black workers had the highest levels of poverty in the county (26%), and the highest level of unemployment (16.9%), I thought for sure that their plight would finally be put forward. But that is not what happened, it seems that white upper and middle class elements, including small businessmen ruined by Wall Street, pacifists, and other white elements had set up the movement to support their world view. They were extremely hostile, even racist, to peoples of color who joined the movement. Still that did not deter me or lead me to reject the entire movement as a fraud.

So when the OWS solidarity group, Occupy Memphis, was created in Memphis, Tennessee, myself and my wife, JoNina, rushed over to Overton Park in Midtown to attend the meeting. The first thing we noticed was that this park was in an upper middle class community, mostly white, and when we got to the canopy where the meeting was being held and strode in, ready to join the fight, we were literally shocked into silence. This meeting was an all-white affair of 100 white activists; ourselves and one other Black guy, who seemed to be an employee of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center,[and was taking pictures of the meeting], were the only peoples of color at the event. We felt like we had been kicked in the stomach, felt sickened and angered! Here, Memphis, Tennessee is a majority Black city (65%), and the people who organized this

event could not even invite one social group or activist in the Black or Hispanic communities. In fact, they did not invite us, even though I was on the mailing list of the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, who despite what they claimed, were ones who organized the entire event. It was an activist friend whom we knew who passed on her invitation email to us.

Why was this important, because this group claims to represent the 99% of the population, but my question was 99% of what population and exactly whom did they represent? White radicals cannot posture and claim that their agenda is for everyone, when almost all of the participants are middle class white people in a majority Black city. Another thing is that we do not have the same agenda, these white people are concerned with something totally different than with the massive poverty in our community, in a city that the U.S. Census Bureau had just designated the ”poorest city in the nation”. Yet who was speaking for these Black poor and unemployed? Nobody at this event. They did not represent anybody but themselves, and a white agenda.

This shows the corruption and arrogance of pacifists and white Left activists. We left this meeting feeling dirty and extremely angry, even snapping at each other in our frustration. But we decided to do something about it, we came home and denounced these white activists in Occupy Memphis on their Facebook page, and challenged anti-white activists to step up and do something about the racist exclusion and obvious internal racism in the group. Predictably, some begged us to ”understand”, and to come back to the group, and it seems the majority angrily defended the group and its politics. Only one guy posted a statement of solidarity, and also denounced racism.

I also posted my impressions and denunciations of the group to my own FaceBook page, and almost immediately, peoples of color and anti-racist activists returned post telling me that in their cities, the same problems were happening. In fact, I heard from activists in ten cities in a matter of hours telling me they experi-

Sometime during the 1980’s, the building of anti-racist tendencies gave way to white-led anti-racist training programs for consciousness-raising. The programs varied of course, but most of them purported to train white radical activists in anti-racist theory, the history of the struggles of peoples of color in America, and other subjects to ”sensitize” them as to the plight of oppressed POC, and make them a better ”anti-racist ally.” This type of consciousness raising is a total fraud, it does absolutely nothing to transform the personalities or the practises of white radicals. It’s just a way of getting such training on a resume, to help them get a job with a social justice agency that has POC staff, or to just make them ”feel good” about themselves, instead of being burdened with the angst of the racial history of whit people in America. The main reason it is incomplete, if not a total fraud, is because none of this training of activists, staff, or board of directors deals with transforming the white-led nonprofit activist group, organizing center, or social justice movement, and its structure itself.

Lecturing white people in a nice way will not rid an entity of internal racism. Regardless of what new knowledge they possess about the workings of racism will not ensure that they will change themselves or their institution, and an anti-racism struggle inside white social change institutions must deal with transforming the institution, as much as the people. As long as the material conditions yet exist, and the same board of directors and entrenched white racists are still calling the shots, there is no question this will continue as a racist group. It requires an internal anti-racist struggle on the inside of the most serious sort to transform such institutions, so serious that it deals with the very soul and survival of the movement itself. The issue is that if it cannot be saved, then it must be smashed, as it does more harm than good to leave it go.

Also the trainers of such programs are highly suspect, one such anti-racist trainer, [Criss Crass, based in San Francisco, California], even after he heard of the many racist incidents inside Occupy Wall Street, continued to spout a line that ”this was the most important

The Total Uselessness of Anti-Racist consciousness raising programs

enced the same thing. I began to understand that this was a national problem throughout the ”Occupy” movement, leading to the inescapable conclusion that they did not care if activists of color took part, they were pushing a white agenda. Then I started seeing letters and articles from activists of color telling me that they not only experienced exclusion, but overt acts of racism and attempts at racist intimidation by activists and erstwhile leaders of various ”Occupy” city solidarity chapters. When they tried to raise these matters within the local groups, they were met with indifference, hostility, and threats. This kind of blatant racism is intolerable, but it shows the nature and degree of internal racism in Occupy Wall Street and its solidarity groups.

Yet, many of the white activists and quite a few Black/POC activists defended the issues as ”isolated incidents”, ”manufactured provocations”, or ”issues that were being looked into”, and other evasions. There were also those OWS solidarity groups who stated that they had created a ”POC outreach committee” which raises the question why they weren’t brought in when the movement was at the planning stages, if they intended for them to take full part. The worst attitude is that it was ”no big deal” and that ”we can’t focus on racial issues because our movement is too important.” This means of course, that they take the attitude that this is a ”side issue”, or one of little consequence.

The racist idea that this is ”our movement” and that ”racial issues” will just ”mess it all up” is the mistaken belief among many white radicals that only they can build a movement for the ”salvation” of the whole of society with a white agenda for the overall struggle. They refuse to see the diversity of concerns of women of color, Black workers, Asian or Indigenous peoples, who have a totally different history of oppression and exploitation under capitalism. They also refuse to see the fact that they start from a very privileged and isolated place in society, and that they do not suffer from the type of extreme oppression over many centuries due to white colonial domination, genocide, and racial oppression. They

have no framework of understanding, and the arrogance and hostility of saying ”I don’t care, let them start their own movement if they don’t like it”, is sheer brazen racism. This coming from those claiming to represent 99% of the commoner population, is the height of hypocrisy.

Such racism will ultimately be the defeat or death of this movement, just as it has for other previous coalitions ostensibly created on a white radical class basis. Besides proving that it does not unite with the struggles of peoples of color, it also betrays that they have no understanding of the internal workings of racism inside such white-led social change movement. The tyranny of a movement without structure claiming that there is no leadership is a common scam known to Anarchism, where hidden ”shot callers” perpetrate the farce of equality, internal democracy, consensus process. It is worse when it is a corrupt and fraudulent white leadership designed to frustrate the desires of peoples of color to raise their issues and have representation in the movement.

It is crucial that Peoples of color organize their own internal caucuses for equal representation and to pressure this white leadership to afford them the same rights as any member, and end these internal racist abuses. Only a powerful movement of POC inside OWS, demanding accountability can get their issues heard, and redirect the entire movement to deal with the massive poverty and unemployment in this period. But anti-racist/anti-colonial whites must create an anti-racist/anti-colonial caucus working with POC, that deals with acting as an internal pressure group, and with making sure that questions of racism and internal oppression are front and center in this movement, and not ”put off to another day.” Further, the white radical politics can no longer dominate a movement claiming to represent the whole of society, and seeking their liberation, the so-called 99%. It is not known if this movement can ever live up to its own creed, or is just another fraudulent white radical tendency to keep white Leftists and pacifists in control of all social movements in America. One thing is for sure, the POC and anti-

racists should stay on top of them to make sure that they make the changes they think are needed, and not surrender to racism in the name of any false class ”unity.”

Finally, if we cannot trust OWS and these solidarity groups in the movement to even include all those locked out and oppressed by this capitalist system, in favour of a ”white rights” middle class agenda, how could we ever trust that after a social revolution, we would not have yet another racist society? We would have given blood, sweat and tears to this struggle, but been betrayed once again, and still have to battle for our full human rights and liberation.